1 WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

2   1.   A method for automated shopping, utilizing an order center

3 connected to a data network, the method comprising the steps of:

4   reading a machine-readable vendor identity code with a scanning

5 means, said scanning means having a memory element;

6   storing said vendor identity code in a transaction file stored in said

7 memory element;

8   reading a machine-readable user identity code with said scanning

9 means;

10   storing said user identity code in said transaction file;

11   reading a machine-readable product identity code with said scanning

12 means;

13   storing said product identity code in said transaction file;

14   connecting said scanning means to the order center over the data

15 network; and,

16   transmitting said transaction file over the data network to the order

17 center.

1   2.   A method as defined by claim 1 wherein said scanning means

2 memory element has an order center data network address stored therein, the

3 method further comprising the step of assigning said order center data network

4   address to said transaction file, and wherein said transaction file is transmitted

5   over said data network to said order center network address.

1   3.   A method as defined by claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

2   receiving said transaction file at the order center;

3   extracting said vendor identity code from said transaction file;

4   determining a destination vendor data network address, and

5   forwarding said transaction file to said destination vendor data

6   network address over the data network.

1   4.   A method as defined by claim 1 wherein said scanning means

2   comprises a handheld wand having two distal ends, a first distal end having optical

3   reader means for reading said vendor identity code, said user identity code, said

4   product identity code, and a second distal end having a connector.

1   5.   A method as defined by claim 1 wherein said step of connecting said

2   scanning means to the order center over the data network further comprises

3   connecting said scanning means to a cradle module, said cradle module connected

4   to the order center over the data network.

6.   A method as defined by claim 5 wherein said cradle module having a communication module therein for connecting to the order center over the data network.

7.   A method as defined by claim 5 wherein said cradle module further comprises peripheral connection means for connecting to a peripheral device.

8.   A method as defined by claim 7 wherein said peripheral device comprises a printer.

9.   A method as defined by claim 7 wherein said peripheral device comprises a monitor.

10.   A method as defined by claim 7 wherein:

said scanning means comprises an elongated handheld wand having a first connector at a first distal end;

said cradle module having a top side, said top side having a recess, a second connector within said recess for mating with said wand first connector; and,

wherein said step of connecting said scanning means to said cradle module comprises placing said wand first distal end in said cradle module top side

9   recess whereby said wand first connector operably engages said cradle second

10   connector.

1   11.   A method as defined by claim 1 wherein:

2   said step of reading said machine-readable vendor identity code with

3   said scanning means further comprises placing said scanning means in a vendor

4   mode prior to reading said vendor identity code;

5   said step of reading a machine-readable user identity code with said

6   scanning means further comprises placing said scanning means in a user mode

7   prior to reading said user identity code;

8   said step of reading a machine-readable product identity code with

9   said scanning means further comprises placing said scanning means in a product

10   mode prior to reading said product identity code; and,

11   said step of transmitting said transaction file over the data network to

12   the order center further comprises placing said scanning means in an order mode

13   prior to transmitting said transaction file.

1   12.   A method as defined by claim 11 wherein said scanning means

2   further comprises:

3   vendor mode switching means for placing said scanning means in

4   said vendor mode, vendor mode indicator means for indicating said scanning

5   means is in said vendor mode;

6   user mode switching means for placing said scanning means in said

7   user mode, user mode indicator means for indicating that said scanning means is in

8   said user mode; and,

9   product mode switching means for placing said scanning means in

10   said product mode, product mode indicator means for indicating that said

11   scanning means is in said product identity mode.

1   13.   A method as defined by claim 12 wherein:

2   said vendor mode switching means comprise an operable vendor

3   mode button, said vendor mode indicator means comprise a vendor mode indicator

4   light;

5   said user mode switching means comprise an operable user mode

6   button, said user mode indicator means comprise a user mode indicator light; and,

7   said product mode switching means comprise an operable product

8   mode button, said product mode indicator means comprise a product mode

9   indicator light.

1   14.   A method as defined by claim 11 wherein said scanning means

2   further comprises order mode switching means for placing said scanning means in

3   said order mode, and wherein said scanning means further comprises order mode

4   indicator means for indicating said scanning means is in said order mode.

1   15.   A method as defined by claim 1 wherein the method further

2   comprises the step of:

3   receiving a transaction confirmation signal with confirmation

4   indicator means, said confirmation signal being sent from the order center upon

5   receipt of said transaction file.

1   16.   A method as defined by claim 15 wherein said confirmation

2   indicator means comprise a sub-component of said scanning means.

1   17.   A method as defined by claim 15 wherein:

2   said step of connecting said scanning means to the order center over

3   the data network further comprises connecting said scanning means to a cradle

4   module connected to the data network; and,

5   wherein said confirmation indicator means comprise a

6   subcomponent of said cradle module.

1   18.   A method as defined by claim 15 wherein:

2   said step of connecting said scanning means to the order center over

3   the data network further comprises connecting said scanning means to a cradle

4   module connected to the data network; and,

5   wherein said confirmation indicator means comprise a peripheral

6   device attached to said cradle means.

1   19.   A method as defined by claim 18 wherein said peripheral device

2   comprises a printer.

1   20.   A method as defined by claim 18 wherein said peripheral device

2   comprises a monitor.

1   21.   A method as defined by claim 1 wherein said scanner means further

2   comprises an order status switch means, and wherein the method further comprises

3   the step of:

4   activating said order status switch means to transmit an order status

5   request over the data network to the order center, said order status request

6   comprising at least said user identity code; and,

7   receiving an order status reply with a peripheral device attached to

8   the data network.

1   22.   A method for automated shopping from a catalogue, the method

2   utilizing a data network, an order center connected to the data network, a cradle

3   module connected to the data network, and an elongated handheld scanning wand

4   having a memory module, the method comprising the steps of:

5   placing the wand in a vendor mode by activating a vendor mode

6   switch means on the wand;

7   reading a machine-readable user vendor identity code from the

8   catalog with optical reading means contained in a first distal end of the wand;

9   storing said vendor identity code in a transaction file in the wand

10   memory module;

11   placing the wand in a user mode by activating a user mode switch

12   means on the wand;

13   reading a machine-readable user identity code with said wand optical

14   reading means;

15   storing said user identity code in said transaction file;

16   placing the wand in a product mode by activating a product

17   switching means on the wand;

18   reading a machine-readable product code from the catalog with said

19   wand optical reading means;

20   storing said product code in said transaction file;

21   connecting a first connector on the wand second distal end with a

22   mating second connector on the cradle;

23   placing said wand in an order mode by switching an order mode

24   switch on the wand;

25   transmitting said transaction file over the data network to the order

26   center; and,

27   receiving a confirmation signal with a confirmation indicator sent

28   from the order center over the data network upon receipt of said transaction file.

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1   23.   A method as defined by claim 22 wherein the method further

2   comprises the steps of:

3   extracting said vendor identity code from said transaction file at the

4   order center; and,

5   transmitting said order over the data network to a vendor

6   corresponding to said vendor identity code.

1   24.   A method as defined by claim 22 wherein said confirmation

2   indicator comprises a printer connected to the cradle module.

1   25.   A method for automated shopping from a catalogue, the method

2   utilizing a data network, an order center connected to the data network, a cradle

3   module connected to the data network, and an elongated wand having two distal

4   ends and a memory module, the method comprising the steps of:

5   activating vendor mode switch means on the wand to place the wand

6   in a vendor mode;

7   reading a machine-readable user vendor identity code from the

8   catalog with optical reading means contained in the wand first distal end;

9   storing said vendor identity code in a transaction file in the wand

10   memory module;

11   activating user mode switch means on the wand to place the wand in

12   a user mode;

13   reading a machine-readable user identity code with said wand optical

14   reading means;

15   storing said user identity code in said transaction file;

16   activating product mode switch means on the wand to place the

17   wand in a product mode;

18   reading a machine-readable product code from said catalog with said

19   wand optical reading means;

20   storing said product code in said transaction file;

21   connecting a first connector on the wand second distal end with a

22   mating second connector on the cradle module;

23   transmitting said transaction file from the wand memory module

24   through the cradle and over the data network to the order center;

25   receiving a confirmation signal with a printer connected to the cradle

26   module, said confirmation signal sent over the data network from the order center

27   upon receipt of said transaction file;

28   activating order status mode switch means on the wand to place the

29   wand in an order status mode;

30   transmitting an order status request from the wand through the cradle

31   over the data network to the order center, said order status request comprising at

32   least said user identity code; and,

33   receiving an order status response corresponding to said user identity

34 code with said printer connected to the cradle, said order status response sent from

35 the order center over the data network upon receipt of said order status request.

1   26.   A computer program product for conducting automated shopping,

2 the computer program product utilizing a data network and an order center

3 connected to the data network, the computer program product comprising

4 computer executable instructions stored in a computer readable medium, the

5 computer readable medium embedded in a handheld scanning means, the

6 instructions when executed causing the scanning means to:

7   read a machine readable vendor code;

8   store said vendor code in a transaction file held on a memory module

9 within the scanning means;

10   read a machine readable user identity code;

11   store said user identity code in said transaction file;

12   read a machine readable product identity code;

13   store said product identity code in said transaction file;

14   connect to the data network; and,

15   transmit said transaction file over the data network to the order

16 center.

27.   A computer program product as defined by claim 26 wherein the
computer program product further utilizes a cradle module connected to the data
network, the cradle module for connection to the scanning means, and wherein
said computer program instructions when executed cause said scanning means to
transmit said transaction file through the cradle to the order center.

28.   A computer program product as defined by claim 27 wherein the
scanning means comprise an elongated handheld wand having two distal ends with
optical reading means contained in a first distal end and a connector for
connecting to the cradle module on the second distal end.

29.   A computer program product as defined by claim 26 wherein the
computer executable instructions when executed further cause the scanning means
to:

enter into a vendor mode upon activation of a vendor mode switch
means on the scanning means prior to reading said vendor identity code;

enter into a user mode upon activation of a user mode switch means
on the scanning means prior to reading said user identity code;

enter into a product mode upon activation of a product mode switch
on the scanning means prior to reading said product identity code; and,

10   enter into an order mode upon activation of an order mode switch

11   means prior to transmitting said transaction file over the data network to the order

12   center.

1   30.   A computer program product for conducting automated shopping,

2   the computer program product utilizing a catalog, a data network, a cradle module

3   connected to the data network, a peripheral device connected to the cradle module,

4   and an order center connected to the data network, the computer program product

5   comprising computer executable instructions stored in a computer readable

6   medium, the computer readable medium embedded in a handheld wand having a

7   scanning means and a memory module, the instructions when executed causing the

8   wand to:

9   enter into a vendor mode upon activation of a vendor mode switch

10   means on the wand;

11   read a machine readable vendor code from the catalog using the

12   optical reader while in said vendor mode;

13   store said vendor code in a transaction file held on the wand memory

14   module;

15   enter into a user mode upon activation of a user mode switch means

16   on the wand;

17   read a machine readable user identity code from the catalog while in

18   said user mode;

19   store said user identity code in said transaction file;

20   enter into a product mode upon activation of a product mode switch

21   means on the wand;

22   read a machine readable product identity code from the catalog

23   while in said product mode;

24   store said product identity code in said transaction file;

25   enter into an order mode upon activation of an order mode switch

26   means;

27   connect to the data network through the cradle module;

28   transmit said transaction file over the data network to the order

29   center while in said order mode;

30   accept a confirmation signal transmitted over the data network from

31   the order center; and,

32   output said confirmation signal over the peripheral device.

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